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Neighbourhood
Improvement
Program:

An
Evaluation

summary report



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Neighbourhood
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Program:

An
Evaluation

summary report

Prepared by:
Project Planning Branch
For:
Community Renewal Branch
June 1981



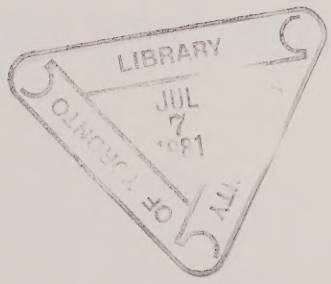
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NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: AN EVALUATION

SUMMARY REPORT

PREFACE

The Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) was established to assist municipalities to upgrade living conditions in residential areas. Seventy-one Ontario municipalities have participated in this Program, undertaking projects ranging from the installation of storm sewers to the purchase and renovation of a community theatre.

In the summer of 1980 the Assistant Deputy Minister of Community Planning and the Community Renewal Branch of the Ministry of Housing (the Provincial administrators of the Program) requested the Project Planning Branch to prepare an evaluation of Ontario's Neighbourhood Improvement Program looking at:

- the community impacts of the Program: Did the project achieve physically what it set out to do and were there any unforeseen impacts?
- the NIP process: Did program delivery operate as effectively and efficiently as possible?

This is a summary report. The main report should be referred to for a full explanation of the methods used and the detailed analysis.

We would like to thank the many people who assisted us in this evaluation and without whom it would not have been possible. These included elected municipal representatives, municipal staff, NIP area residents and local realtors in the seven study communities: Cochrane, Etobicoke, Goderich, Grimsby, Ottawa, Prescott and Thunder Bay. Planners in the Community Renewal Branch also provided background information to us. A list of the persons who contributed to this study may be found in Appendix A.

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1

Introduction

1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of NIP was:

to encourage and support efforts of municipalities in concert with residents, toward the improvement of the physical environment of the neighbourhood and the development of social and recreational amenities.*

NIP was the successor to the Federal-Provincial Urban Renewal Program, some aspects of which by 1968 had become unpopular. The Urban Renewal Program had been primarily directed toward the clearance of deteriorating or deteriorated neighbourhoods, and their replacement by new, usually high density, housing.

In contrast NIP stressed a comprehensive program to upgrade public facilities and services at the neighbourhood level. Displacement of existing residents was to be kept to a minimum and NIP was complemented by the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) which provided financial assistance to homeowners to carry out basic repairs to their properties. The Program and its guidelines were prepared by the Federal Government. Figure 1, following, sets out the Program objectives.

A total of 134 projects, costing approximately \$137 million, have been or are being carried out in Ontario under NIP. The estimated Provincial share of these projects will be \$34 million, although not all funds have been spent yet.

Approximately a third of these dollars are allocated to hard service improvements, one half to social or recreational amenities and the remainder to administration.

The estimated final Provincial expenditure will be:

- . \$9.30 per resident in NIP municipalities
- . \$483,098 per NIP municipality.

* p. 1, CMHC, Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program: Main Report, April 1979.

Figure 1

Neighbourhood Improvement Program Objectives*

1. To improve those residential neighbourhoods which show evidence of need and of potential viability.
2. To improve and maintain the quality of the physical environment of the neighbourhood.
3. To improve the amenities of neighbourhoods.
4. To increase the effect of related programs.
5. To improve the neighbourhood in a manner which meets the aspirations of neighbourhood residents and the community at large.
6. To deliver the program in a manner which allows decisions to be made within known funding and time limits.

* Source: Central Mortgage and Housing Corp. and The Province of Ontario, Neighbourhood Improvement Program Administration Guide, October 1975.

Study Approach

The purpose of our review was to evaluate the NIP process and projects with a view to assessing the community impacts, positive and negative.

Not all the NIP projects have been completed as yet. Some began as late as 1978 -- the year financial allocations for the program ended. Consequently we decided to look in detail at a representative sample of finished or nearly finished projects across the Province.

The selected projects were:

Hillcrest, Cochrane

Laburnham, Etobicoke

East Side, Goderich

Grimsby Beach, Grimsby

Centretown 4, Ottawa

Project 1, Prescott

Ogden-East End, Thunder Bay

The seven case study communities reflect the wide range of municipalities involved in NIP. Cochrane and Prescott, the smallest, for instance, had populations in the vicinity of 5,000 persons in 1976, while Ottawa, the largest, had a population of about 304,500.

The neighbourhood improvement areas also differed substantially among the various municipalities. The largest in size was Ogden-East End in Thunder Bay, with 2710 households on 219 hectares (540 acres). The smallest area was Hillcrest in Cochrane, on 8 hectares (21 acres) with 60 households.

All were older neighbourhoods and all had a significant number of houses requiring repair or beyond repair. Table 1 portrays the key characteristics of the selected NIP areas.

TABLE 1

NIP Area Characteristics

Character- istics	NIP Area						
	Hillcrest	Laburnham	East Side	Grimsby Beach	Centre- town 4	Project 1	Ogden- East End
Municipality	Cochrane	Etobicoke	Goderich	Grimsby	Ottawa	Prescott	Thunder Bay
Municipal Population (1976)	4,974	279,109	7,385	15,567	304,462	4,975	111,476
NIP Area Population (1976)	222	860	1,075	450	2,900	3,337	8,831
Total NIP \$	138,604	2,279,637*	1,950,237	534,816	625,650	3,001,731	2,060,905
\$ / NIP Area Resident	624	2,650	1,814	1,188	216	900	233
Size of NIP Area (hectares)	8	19	83	61	29	102	219
No. of Households	60	230	516	189	1,046	1,025	2,710
% of Houses Requiring or Beyond Repair	55	35	53	35	90	53	25
No. of RRAP Loans (to Feb.1981)	9	3	3**	67	254	230	177
No. of OHRP Loans (to Feb.1981)	0	0	6	10	0	68	0

* There is still a reserve of \$300,000.

** RRAP began in September, 1980 in Goderich.



2

Case Studies

Cochrane

Example of new
house constructed
after implementa-
tion of N.I.P.



Huron Road
(Improvements
included, road
paving and side-
walk installa-
tion)



Hillcrest Adventure
Park





-  Hillcrest N.I.P. Area
-  C.B.D.

Cochrane

2.1 COCHRANE

Prior to NIP, the Hillcrest area was generally rundown and in need of improvements. There was no parkland in the neighbourhood, there were no hard services and the roads were not paved. A fairly large capital expenditure was required to provide these basic municipal services. Until NIP was initiated the Town could not afford to undertake these works.

The projects completed under NIP were:

- Construction of a 2 hectare playground/park that included not only playground equipment for children, but also landscaping of sufficient open space for other activities.
- Provision of adequate surface drainage with the installation of storm sewers along Huron Road.
- Construction of sidewalks along both sides of Huron Road.
- Paving of Huron Road, now the only road in the neighbourhood that is asphalt-covered.
- Provision of street lights throughout Hillcrest.
- Provision of new house numbers for the area.

The total NIP budget was \$138,604.

In concert with NIP the Town used a grant from the Ministry of Environment to install sanitary sewers and watermains to service the Hillcrest homes.

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications also provided a subsidy of \$11,526 for the reconstruction of Huron Road. This helped reduce the NIP debt-load on the municipality and the Town debentured \$40,000 to cover its portion of the NIP financing. The servicing of this debt is not creating any undue hardship for the Town.

Beyond the funding budgetted within the Neighbourhood Improvement Program for construction of the adventure playground, the Town required more money to complete its development. The Town was able to generate \$40,000 from the following private and public sources:

- \$10,000, Ministry of Culture and Recreation
- \$15,000, Wintario
- \$15,000, Private clubs and local organizations (e.g. Kiwanis, Kinsmen).

The Town Clerk administered NIP, although consultants prepared the redevelopment plan and the Works Department carried out the actual construction of the hard and soft services. This did increase (significantly) the workload of existing municipal staff, but there were apparently no major problems experienced.

Conclusions

The Hillcrest Neighbourhood Improvement Program was successful. The projects completed under the Program helped to upgrade the level of services in the area to an acceptable standard and to one equivalent to the rest of the Town. Certainly all six Program objectives (page 2) appear to have been met and, in addition, there have been a number of positive community impacts:

- . improved visual appearance: through the paving of Huron Road and installation of street lights.
- . new neighbourhood facilities: the adventure playground/park.
- . significant private rehabilitation: although RRAP has not been used extensively, at least 30 houses (50 cent of the housing stock) have been improved privately.
- . increase in value of existing stock: the average value of houses in the NIP area increased 39 percent from \$19,416 in 1975 to \$27,083 in 1980. Other factors, including inflation, have unquestionably contributed to this increase, but the neighbourhood improvements carried out under NIP were also key to increased house values in Hillcrest. Increase in values for the entire Town was much less over the same period: \$35,765 (1975) and \$40,437 (1980) (13 percent increase).
- . significant new residential construction: approximately twenty new houses have been built in Hillcrest since the beginning of NIP.

The benefits definitely outweighed any costs of NIP in the Town of Cochrane. In fact, the costs only became apparent in retrospect and in comparison to the Town's handling of its second NIP project: West Annex.

Thus far, they have been able to finance the West Annex without borrowing further. If the Town can continue to finance West Annex improvements from their capital budget, debenturing their portion may not be necessary. The Town feels that perhaps they should not have borrowed money to fund their portion of the Hillcrest NIP project.

Both Hillcrest and the West Annex were the neighbourhoods most in need of improvement in Cochrane. The Town has identified two other public improvement projects:

- the mobile home park (on privately owned land) immediately south of 5th Street, west of the Annex subdivision requires the installation of full municipal services;
- a new trunk sewer is needed to serve the part of the Town east of Commando Lake.

Neither of these projects were eligible for funding under NIP, but they are indicative of the kind of high cost capital improvements requiring funding assistance in smaller municipalities.



LEGEND



Park-Playground

SOFT SERVICES
HILLCREST N.I.P. AREA

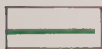
Cochrane



LEGEND



Streetlights



Storm Sewers



Road Re-Surfacing and
Sidewalk Construction

HARD SERVICES
HILLCREST N.I.P. AREA

Cochrane

map 2

Etobicoke



Conditions previous
to N.I.P.



New Laburnham Park



Typical Housing
Stock

2.2 ETOBICOKE

Etobicoke's Laburnham Neighbourhood Improvement Program was unique among our case studies, as well as unique among all the NIP projects undertaken in the Province.

The project was devoted exclusively to the purchase of noxious industrial uses and deteriorating residential properties in the Laburnham neighbourhood. A total of nine industrial properties and eight houses were purchased for the \$2.3 million NIP budget.*

Originally it was intended that the acquired properties would be used for a combination of social housing and parkland, but most of the purchased land will now be used for parkland and only eight lots will be sold for private market housing.

Laburnham was identified as early as 1966 by the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board as an area requiring substantial clearance and redevelopment in order to eliminate blight and to provide an acceptable living environment.

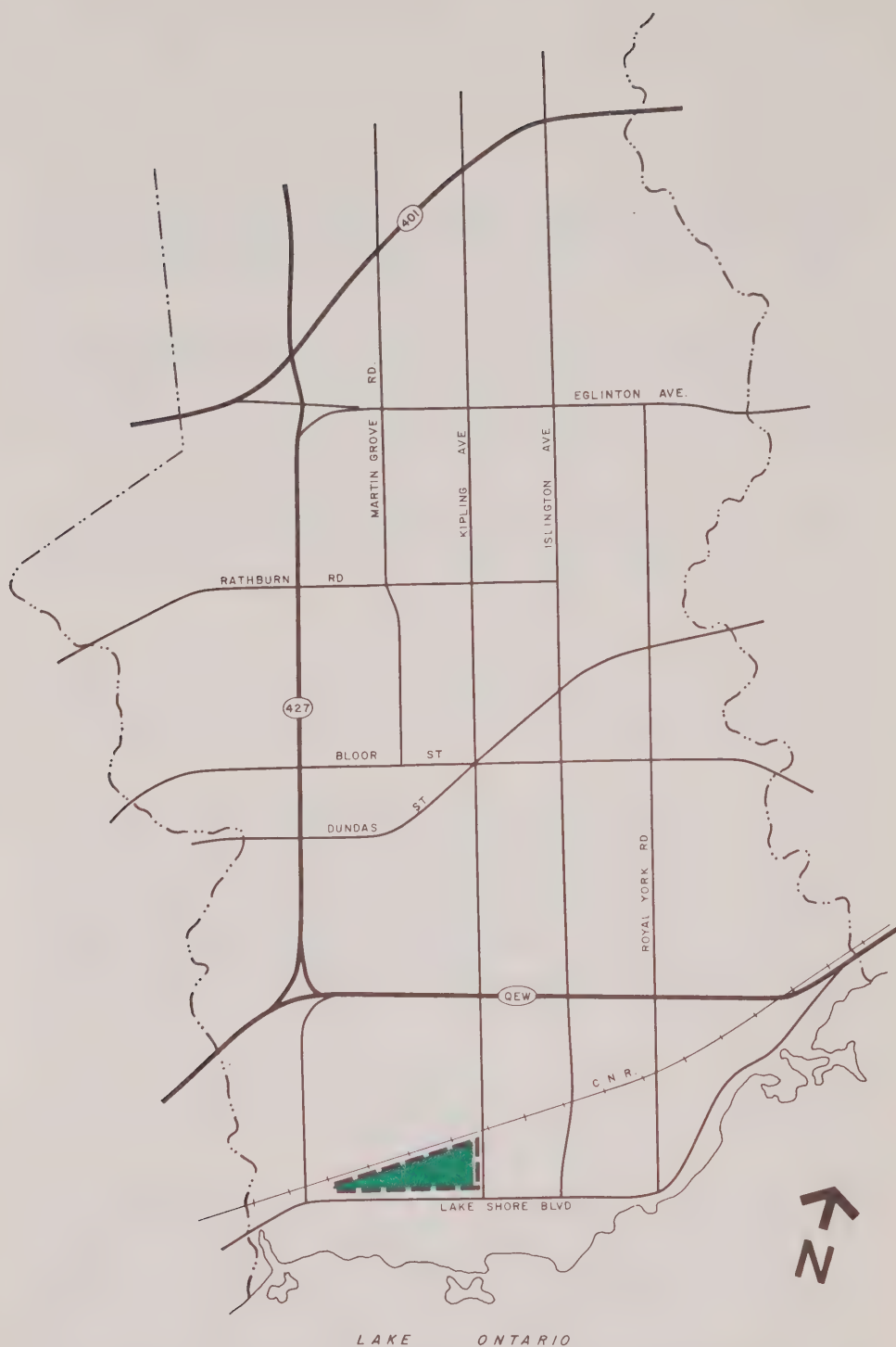
It was scheduled for urban renewal under the mid-sixties Federal-Provincial Urban Renewal Program. Once funding was stopped for this Program, plans for Laburnham were shelved until 1972 when the Borough's Planning Department prepared a report on the area entitled The Laburnham Special Study Area Report. This report formed the basis of the NIP redevelopment plan, and its main objective was to resolve the conflict between industrial and residential land uses in the area.

Although many of the industries had located in the area before the housing was built, a number had recently expanded or changed their use.

The industries, in particular Bell Fuel and Evergreen Auto Wreckers, were the source of many environmental and health hazards, such as all night traffic, noise, rats and other rodents. Some car parts were packed nine meters high in places.

It was intended when the 1972 Redevelopment Plan was prepared to replace the industries and housing ac-

* This includes \$82,756 for administration costs.



Laburnham N.I.P. Area

Etobicoke

quired with a combination of social housing and parkland. The parkland would have run along the railway, providing a green barrier between the existing housing and the CN main rail line.

On the remaining vacant lands, about one hectare scattered through the area, the 1972 plan proposed 32 townhouse units, 3 semi-detached units, a duplex and 2 single family houses. In 1974 when the NIP Working Committee was formed, residents strongly objected to the use of so much land for medium density social housing.

There was no clear definition of what was meant by social housing. Residents feared an influx of subsidized tenants in substandard units. This situation would, they believed, depress their property values. The municipality, on the other hand, was talking about the Assisted Home Ownership Program, not rental units. Nevertheless no agreement could be achieved. Residents wanted to maintain the status quo: no increase in the density or significant changes in the appearance of area streets by introducing row housing. Residents were ultimately successful in reducing the proposed amount of housing from 42 units to 8 units.

This reduction in housing resulted in the creation of a 5.2 hectare park along the railway line. The older but smaller existing neighbourhood park on Laburnham Avenue will be sold for private market housing once the purchase of the industrial lands are completed.

Conclusions

The Laburnham NIP project was successful in meeting NIP objectives:

- . the community was and continues to be viable;
- . the physical environment has been significantly improved in line with residents' wishes; and
- . the amenities have been upgraded.

The overall community impacts have been positive.

- Removal of the noxious land uses, reduction of the speed and volume of truck traffic and lessening of neighbourhood pollution.



LEGEND



Park



Residential Low Density

SOFT SERVICES
LABURNHAM N.I.P. AREA

Etobicoke

- A larger neighbourhood park with improved and expanded facilities.
- Improvements to the area making it potentially more desirable for young families to move in when the older families move out, thus ensuring it has a future.
- Spawned action to down-zone the neighbourhood to permit single-family housing only.

Relative to the size of the Borough, Laburnham is a very small neighbourhood. The improvements carried out under NIP have had little impact elsewhere in Etobicoke, and NIP does not appear to have influenced the initiation of much residential rehabilitation activity. This may reflect the fact that residents have continually maintained their homes and that the need is not there. RRAP was also not utilized extensively in Laburnham, apparently because of RRAP income restrictions and a limited community information program.

With respect to negative community impacts, municipal staff expressed the opinion that the costs of eliminating industry in Laburnham were very high for the results achieved. Not all the industries have been removed and exposure of the railway tracks now presents new concerns over noise, vibrations and danger to children.

Administratively, there have been no major problems with NIP, but there were some minor concerns expressed by municipal staff:

- The agreement between the Borough and Metro Toronto is not flexible and there have been problems negotiating changes instituted during the implementation of the plan, e.g. the financial changes resulting from the move from social to open market housing.
- The direct participation of residents in the process (with voting privileges) created delays and may influence Borough staff not to recommend similar procedures in the future.

Goderich

Water Tower
Parkette



Road condition
previous to N.I.P.



Road resurfacing
and new sidewalks



2.3 GODERICH

According to municipal staff, the Goderich East Side NIP project is "the most successful project the Town has ever carried out".

The improvements involved mostly hard services:

- installation of new sanitary sewers where previously there had been none
- the separation of sanitary and storm sewers
- road reconstruction, including paving and new curbs and gutters.

These hard service improvements represented about 94 percent of all dollars spent, or \$1.8 million out of a \$1.93 million budget. The remaining six percent of the funds were used to upgrade facilities in Judith Gooderham Park and to develop open space along the Maitland River escarpment. This last project entailed reclamation of derelict lands formerly used as a garbage dump.

Before NIP the East Side was in poor condition. There were a number of fairly serious environmental problems:

- basement flooding,
- ponding of water along the roads,
- the antiquated sewers and watermains.

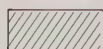
The Town received additional funding from the Ministry of Transportation and Communications. This amounted to more than forty percent of the municipality's share of NIP, approximately \$400,000, and decreased the amount of money to be contributed by the Town. The remaining municipal portion was financed out of the capital works budget each year.

RRAP funds have not been used extensively as yet, mainly due to some administrative problems which delayed its introduction in Goderich until the summer of 1980. Only three homeowners (for the sum of \$16,400) so far have used RRAP.

However, more than 30 homeowners have privately upgraded their properties and a number of other homeowners have expressed an interest in seeking RRAP funding.



East Side N.I.P. Area



C.B.D.



Goderich

The administration of NIP was carried out within the existing municipal organization. The clerk acted as the NIP co-ordinator and the public works commissioner enforced the property standards. In addition, the Town hired Proctor and Redfern Ltd. to prepare the Redevelopment Plan.

The Town did not encounter any problems in the administration of NIP with other levels of government. While NIP may have increased the workload of municipal staff, they did not express such concerns to us.

Public participation was an important part of NIP. Residents were actively involved in selecting improvements. Some resident recommendations, however, were not implemented after technical studies were prepared, such as enclosure of the Judith Gooderham pool.

Conclusions

NIP improved the East Side neighbourhood both physically and aesthetically, and has had a substantially positive community impact. The positive impacts which we identified are set out below:

- Judith Gooderham Park facilities and appearance have been improved. This is the only pool in the Town and so the improvements have not only extended the life of the pool, but also upgraded a community-wide facility.
- Water Tower Parkette has improved the surrounding area aesthetically and has made the area safer for the children.
- Redevelopment of the derelict lands along the Maitland River Valley has improved the neighbourhood and has contributed to the creation of an open space system along the River.
- Improved municipal services have resulted in a more visually attractive neighbourhood, especially with new asphalt road surface and installation of curbing.
- The market for homes in the East Side has been improved. Because of a demonstrated municipal interest in the area, people are more willing to purchase and upgrade properties in this part of Town.

- NIP stimulated private rehabilitation in the East Side. Most of the homes in this neighbourhood were built before 1946 and were in need of some rehabilitation.

Overall NIP has created a healthy environment from a gradually deteriorating one. The results of NIP were visible within the first year (1978), giving the residents confidence in the Program. For the most part NIP met all its Program objectives in Goderich.

The scheduling of projects presented no serious problems, although the proposed budget was not met and additional funds had to be secured in 1980 to complete the work program.

The Town has not experienced any apparent financial hardship (i.e., taxes were not raised). Other programs, such as those administered by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, were well used to reduce the Town's contribution to NIP.



LEGEND



Road Re-Surfacing



Storm Sewer Outlets



Sanitary Sewers

HARD SERVICES
EAST SIDE N.I.P. AREA

Goderich

map 7



LEGEND



Watertower



Judith Gooderham Park



Maitland Valley Recreation Area

SOFT SERVICES
EAST SIDE N.I.P. AREA

Goderich

map 8

Grimsby



Cairn in centre of Auditorium
Circle



Bell Park



Victoria Terrace
landscaped under
NIP

2.4 GRIMSBY

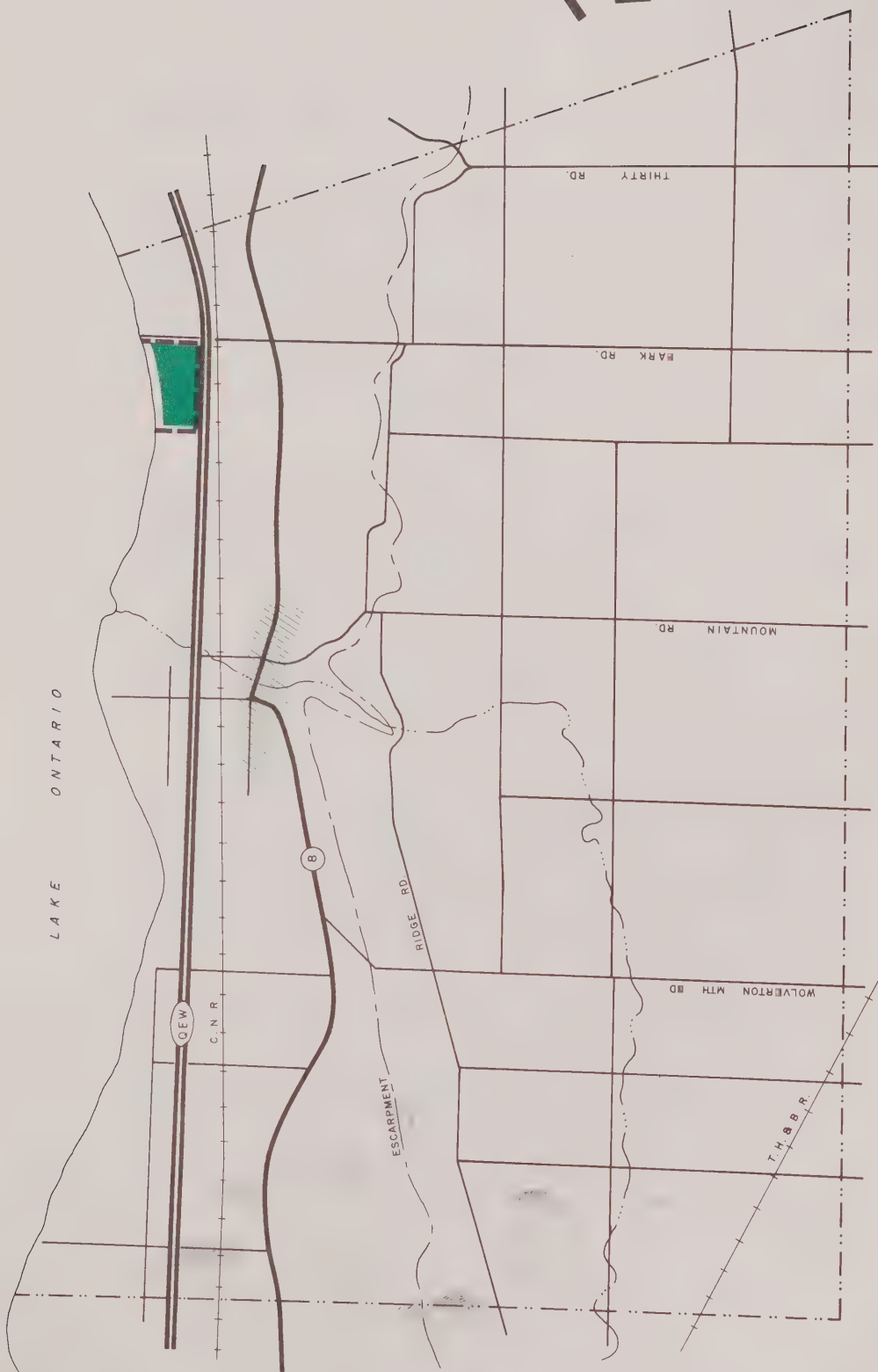
Founded in the mid-1800's as a summer resort area, Grimsby Beach's problems had been with the community for a long time.

The original wooden summer cottages had been converted to permanent dwellings several decades ago, but remained well below modern municipal building standards. The area had its own sewage treatment facility, but this was inadequate to cope with year-round volumes. The roads were unpaved. Drainage was poor and flooding was a common problem. Many houses were crowded very close together, particularly in the Auditorium Circle area, and presented a serious fire hazard in their deteriorated condition.

Hard service projects, such as improving the road system and eliminating spring flooding problems, and soft service projects, such as providing adequate parkland, were necessary elements in the Beach's rehabilitation. This had to be accompanied by basic upgrading of the residential properties to be effective.

Initiated in February 1974, the Grimsby Beach NIP program was completed in May 1978 -- eight months after its originally scheduled completion date. The following projects were carried out under NIP, for a total cost of \$534,816:

- Improvement of traffic and pedestrian circulation within the area and better access to the area was provided through road reconstruction. This work included: construction of Temple Lane connecting Park Road North with Third Avenue; reconstruction and paving of the remaining streets in the Phase I area, including curb and gutter construction (see Map 10).
- Utility relocation as necessary, resulting from road and sewer work,
- Grimsby Beach Community Hall improvements including plumbing repairs, kitchen addition and tennis court construction,
- Landscaping and installation of playground equipment in Bell Park,



LAKE ONTARIO

QEW

C.N.R.

8

ESCARPMENT

RIDGE RD

WOLVERTON MTH RD

THABR

MOUNTAIN RD

MARK RD

THIRTY RD



Grimsby Beach N.I.P. Area



C.B.D.

Grimsby

- Victoria Terrace cleanup consisted of landscaping and access control (by means of fence installation),
- Landscaping the centre of Auditorium Circle.

To implement these improvements to the hard and soft services in the area (see Maps 11 and 12), the acquisition of ten residential properties was necessary. All but two of the properties were acquired for road reconstruction; the remaining two were necessary for parkland. The houses standing on all ten lots were demolished.

The Town's share of NIP, \$220,810, was financed in the following manner: \$125,000 was debentured, \$34,810 was taken from the Current Revenue Budget and the balance of \$61,000 was obtained through a Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MTC) subsidy. The MTC funds were put toward road reconstruction and repair costs.

The total amount of money spent was less than the amount originally budgeted for all items except administration. The administration expenses were initially under-estimated.

Conclusions

Perhaps the best way to judge the overall success of the Grimsby Beach Program is through the visual improvements. Better road access to, and within the area, accomplished by a road reconstruction program, the cleanup and landscaping of open space and the installation of playground equipment, improvement in the condition of the housing stock, and increased private development, have all contributed to the renewal of the area.

The major positive community impacts are:

- Serious problems of spring flooding and poor traffic and pedestrian accessibility have been reduced or eliminated due to NIP improvements.
- Although Grimsby Beach is still perceived by Grimsby residents to be a separate and somewhat less desirable neighbourhood to reside in, new families are now being attracted to the area.



Grimsby

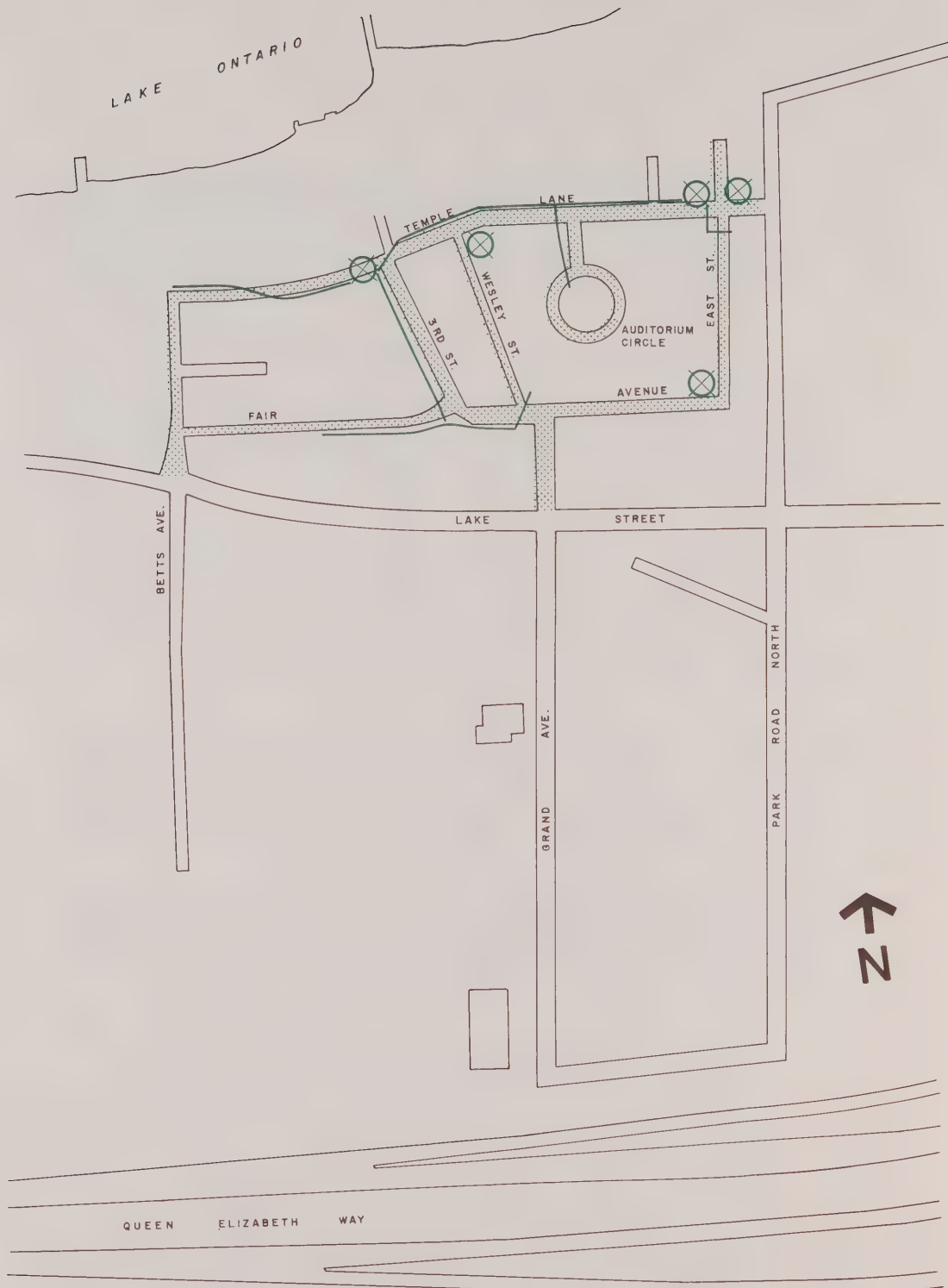
- Private investment has occurred in the NIP area as evidenced by the Grimsby Woodland housing development (a 127 unit subdivision). A small commercial enterprise at Park Road and Lake Street has also developed since the introduction of NIP.
- Ten homes have been privately upgraded.

Residential rehabilitation was a very important aspect of community renewal in Grimsby Beach. Despite widespread resident use of RRAP and OHRP, resident satisfaction with housing improvements was not completely shared by municipal officials.

Officials feel the social climate of the area and the poor basic quality of the housing stock may result in houses reverting back to their pre-RRAP condition. The Town cited an example of an applicant who received substantial RRAP funds (\$4,000) for home improvements. Within a few years, this house had to be demolished due to its poor condition.

Generally, then, the Grimsby Beach project had a positive community impact and met the six original NIP objectives. There have been no unforeseen negative impacts. Program delivery appears to have proceeded without complication. Although the proposed schedule was not met exactly, funds were underspent.

The municipality financed a portion of its costs by taking out a \$125,000 debenture. The Town does not appear to have any difficulty in meeting this debt nor was Council reluctant to take it on.



LEGEND



Road Re-Surfacing Including
Curb & Gutter Construction

Storm Sewer Installation


Houses Demolished For Road Construction

HARD SERVICES
GRIMSBY BEACH N.I.P. AREA

Grimsby



LEGEND

-  House Demolition For Parkland
- 1 Victoria Terrace
- 2 Auditorium Circle
- 3 Bell Park
- 4 Grimsby Beach Community Hall
- 5 Tennis Court

SOFT SERVICES
GRIMSBY BEACH N.I.P. AREA

Grimsby

Ottawa

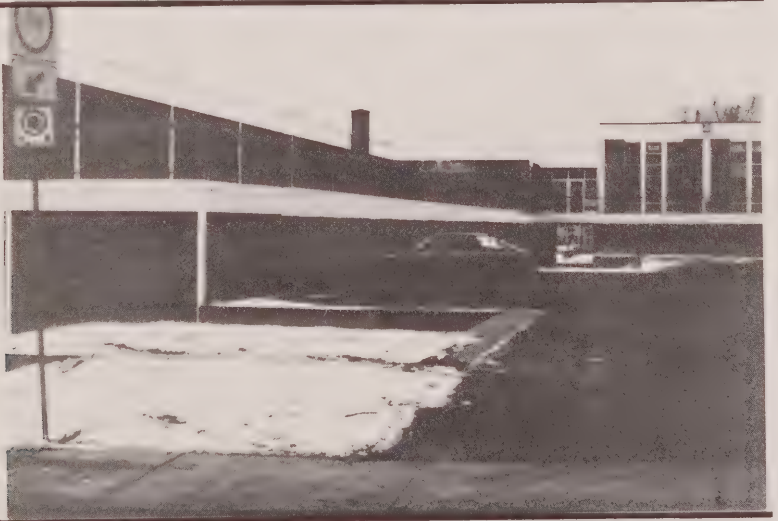
Streetscaping -
Flora Street



Tot lot constructed on
Arlington Street



McNabb Community
Centre



2.5 OTTAWA

The Centretown 4 Neighbourhood Improvement Program was quite successful in three areas:

- (1) It enabled the actual expansion of existing recreational and social facilities in the neighbourhood.
- (2) It allowed the City to minimize the serious traffic problems on local streets through a street landscaping and reorganization program.
- (3) It stimulated, in combination with the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, substantial rejuvenation of housing in the area.

Overall NIP has appeared to meet the objectives set out for the Program by the senior levels of government.

Prior to NIP, a high degree of instability, in terms of resident tenure, prevailed in Centretown 4. The proliferation of rooming houses and absentee-owned buildings was evident. As a result, many transients and single-person households resided there. Combined with a total lack of open space for recreational purposes, the area was not attractive to families or residents in general.

Centretown 4 had a population of 2900 in 1976 and covered an area of 29 hectares (72 acres). It was predominately residential and was part of the larger downtown area known, simply, as Centretown. It was adjacent to another NIP area, Centretown 3, with their common boundary being Gladstone Avenue.

The Centretown 4 NIP process was started in March 1974 and completed in March 1980. The cost of NIP reached a total of \$625,650., less than the original estimate of \$690,406.

Improvement of traffic circulation in the area, a goal of NIP, was accomplished through the street landscaping project. Narrowing of the streets reduced traffic speed and the system of one-way streets helped reduce the use of the area as a short-cut for through traffic.



Centretown 4 N.I.P. Area



C.B.D.

Ottawa

Other principal projects included expansion of the McNabb Community Centre, construction of a tot-lot on Arlington Street and placement of 15 wooden refuse containers throughout the area.

During the selection process, several proposed soft service projects - a day care centre, a community information centre and noise study - were deleted from the Program, enabling a higher proportion of the budget to be spent on hard services.

This illustrates the program's flexibility and the fact that after more in-depth study projects could be dropped, if judged not viable.

Conclusions

The success of NIP in Centretown 4 is apparent. Improvements to both hard and soft services have resulted in a visual change to the area, which reinforces the NIP objective of improving the quality of a residential neighbourhood. In conjunction with the Centretown Secondary Plan, NIP has stabilized the neighbourhood to a point that its attractiveness as an inner city residential neighbourhood has returned.

The major conclusions drawn from this evaluation include:

- Although slightly more money was spent on hard services than soft services, the importance of the latter is emphasized by the type of social/recreational projects undertaken. These projects (community centre expansion, tot-lot development, street-scaping) reinforced the human character of the neighbourhood.
- NIP enabled the City to move up Centretown 4 in its timetable of regular hard service improvements to city neighbourhoods.
- The City's program of Neighbourhood Studies emphasizes its commitment to long term planning at the neighbourhood level and NIP reinforced this.
- Success of NIP and RRAP in the area appears to have initiated significant private rehabilitation of residential units.

- Improvements completed under NIP and RRAP indirectly eased redevelopment pressures evident prior to NIP.
- House prices in the neighbourhood have not increased to such a large extent (relative to the rest of the City) that lower income groups are now excluded. The essential character of the area and its blue collar housing market remains, even with the improvements.



Road Re-Surfacing and Sidewalk Construction





Traffic Signal

**HARD SERVICES
CENTRETOWN 4 N.I.P. AREA**

Ottawa



LEGEND

-  Community Centre Expansion
-  Tot-Lot
-  Street Landscaping / Reorganization

SOFT SERVICES
CENTRETOWN 4 N.I.P. AREA

Ottawa

Prescott



Fire/Police Hall Renovation



Creative playground
equipment in school
yard



Forwarders Museum
on Water Street

2.6 PRESCOTT

The Town of Prescott designated its NIP area to include not only a major portion of the Town's residential area, but also the downtown commercial sector (see Map 16). Almost seventy percent of the 4,975 residents of Prescott live in the Project 1 neighbourhood improvement area.

This allowed the Town to adopt a varied and innovative set of NIP projects that renewed and rejuvenated the residential neighbourhood as well as the commercial core and benefitted the Town as a whole.

The total cost of the Program thus far is \$3,001,731. Of this, \$1,693,052 (56%) has been spent on hard services and \$1,237,673 (41%) on soft services. The Provincial share was \$750,432 (25%).

The improvements to hard services consisted mainly of sanitary sewer reconstruction and storm sewer installation. The old sewer system in the Town was a combined sanitary and storm system. This was deteriorating due to age and a sewer separation program was necessary to eliminate flooding problems. In addition, road reconstruction and sidewalk improvements were carried out (see Map 17) across the neighbourhood.

To ensure the area maintains and improves its social amenities, a large number of soft service projects were implemented. These included construction of a new waterfront park at the foot of Centre Street downtown (along with wharf construction), community centre expansion, fire/police hall improvements and Centennial Park landscaping. The soft service component also included several projects unique to Prescott and to NIP as a whole:

- . creation of the Forwarders' Museum,
- . construction of a clock tower downtown,
- . development of a community health facility and downtown streetscaping (see Map 18).

There was significant involvement in NIP by private sector organizations. Included in this group were the Rotary Club, the Leeds-Grenville Historical Society, the Kinsmen, the Kiwanis and the King Street Business



Project 1 N.I.P. Area

C.B.D.

Prescott

Improvement Area participants. Collectively they contributed \$38,574 to various NIP projects. Their involvement increased the impact of NIP on the community and enabled the Town to take on projects, such as the clock tower, which they might not have been able to do otherwise.

To date, the Town has not had to borrow money to finance their portion of NIP costs. These costs have been covered by their capital expense budget. In fact, NIP expenditure by the municipality has taken up 100 percent of their capital budget over the last four years. However, the final NIP project, the community health facility, may require the Town to borrow some funds.

Conclusions

The inclusion of the majority of the Town of Prescott within NIP area boundaries reflects the comprehensive scope of the Program here.

Given the nature of NIP in a small town, this impact reinforces and rejuvenates the existing community. It is not the type of impact that might result in a significant inflow of population or an increase in whitepainting.

The administration of NIP proceeded smoothly in Prescott. Only one additional staff member, the co-ordinator, was hired specifically for the Program.

Delays in project approvals did occur at all government levels but particularly at the local level. These resulted in two extensions to the deadline.

One obvious consequence of NIP is the visual improvement created by road repairs, including curbs and gutters, and sidewalk replacement and landscaping. Still another is the significant private investment in the downtown, including the construction of Prescott Place.

Other impacts include:

- . The elimination of serious potential water and sewage problems through the expenditure of \$1.6 million to upgrade the Town's hard services.



LEGEND

- 1 Waterfront Park / Wharf
- 2 Centennial Park
- 3 Community Centre
- 4 For Warders Museum
- 5 Health Facility
- 6 Clock Tower

- 7 Fire / Police Hall
- 8 Municipal Building
- 9,10 Creative Playgrounds (Schools)

SOFT SERVICES
PROJECT 1 N.I.P. AREA

Prescott

Thunder Bay



Road resurfacing and new sidewalk
in Odgen-East End



Northern Avenue
Bridge



Creative Playground
at Charry Park

2.7 THUNDER BAY

The Ogden-East End NIP area was originally two separate neighbourhoods. They are physically separated by railway tracks, but are linked by a bridge over the tracks. Together they form one of the oldest areas of Thunder Bay and were part of Fort William, which developed before Port Arthur (see Map 19). There are 2,710 (1976) households in the Ogden-East End neighbourhood, with a population of 8,831. The total land area is 218 hectares, the largest of all our case studies.

Ogden-East End is a fairly typical example of a neighbourhood which had deteriorated over time. For example, the area was serviced by the oldest and smallest diameter sewer system in Thunder Bay, and during heavy rainfalls some residents had to contend with basement flooding, sewage back-up and overflow of untreated sewage into the local river system. The sidewalks and roads were also in need of substantial upgrading.

There were only four hectares of park for almost 9,000 people, which meant the area was deficient by 14 hectares, according to the Lakehead Official Plan. Some of the sheds in the backlanes of the houses were harbouring garbage, and attracting rats and other rodents. The combination of these factors made Ogden-East End the logical choice as the first neighbourhood to receive NIP funds in Thunder Bay.

Ogden-East End was designated as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area on January 6, 1975, with an initial allocation of \$1.72 million. In 1976 supplemental funds (\$215,000) were requested and approved when Northern Avenue was added to the NIP area. This brought total NIP funding to \$1.9 million.

Almost 80 percent of the NIP funds were spent on soft services which included:

- . land acquisition for senior citizens housing and parks,
- . expansion and upgrading of existing park facilities,
- . construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Neebing River,



Ogden-East End N.I.P. Area

C.B.D.

Thunder Bay

- . purchase of the Magnus Theatre and a site for the Thunder Bay Boys and Girls Club.

Hard service improvements were also carried out in Ogden-East End. NIP funds, however, contributed primarily to road resurfacing and sidewalk construction.

The municipality spent over \$2.0 million from its capital works budget on hard services in the area in addition to NIP. It also resurfaced most of the roads, repaired or laid most of the new sidewalks, and installed new sanitary and storm sewers.

Public participation played a major role in Thunder Bay's NIP project. A residents' committee was formed under NIP to advise the City on how NIP funds should be allocated. Over 200 committee meetings were held during the planning stage alone (over a 2 year period).

The administration of NIP was the responsibility of the NIP coordinator who was hired specifically for the Program and who was not part of the City's Planning Department. The coordinator and the community development planners he hired worked with the citizens' committee and produced the Redevelopment Plan. Employment of additional staff was financed by a L.I.P. grant and the Canada Works Program.

Conclusion

Without NIP this area would probably have deteriorated further. The improvements have rejuvenated the neighbourhood both physically and visually. It should remain a viable, healthy low-to-moderate-income residential area for some time into the future. There is no evidence of unforeseen negative impacts, and no major administrative problems were mentioned during our interviews.

In summary, the main beneficial impacts have been:

- . Parks throughout the neighbourhood have been improved. Minnesota Park, for example, will be a viable recreational facility for many more years. Also, the creative playgrounds at Minnesota and Charry Park have been successful in broadening the scope and nature of play activities available within the area.

- . The parkettes have improved the area aesthetically by using formerly vacant unkept lots and are now well used by both senior citizens and children.
- . The renovation of the Magnus Theatre and improvements to Charry Park have altered the perception of the East End in the minds of many Thunder Bay residents -- from negative to positive.
- . NIP and RRAP together stimulated significant private rehabilitation activity throughout the neighbourhood. New residential construction has also taken place.



LEGEND



Road Re-Surfacing



Sidewalk Construction

HARD SERVICES

OGDEN-EAST END N.I.P. AREA

Thunder Bay



SOFT SERVICES
OGDEN-EAST END N.I.P. AREA

Thunder Bay

LEGEND

- 1 Senior Citizen Housing 86 Units
- 2 Senior Citizen Housing 22 Units
- 3 Frank Cherry Park
- 4 Minnesota Park
- 5 Prince Arthur Blvd. Triangle
- 6 St. Lukes Church-Parkette

- 7 Pacific Ave. Parkette
- 8 Northern Ave. Bridge
- 9 Thunder Bay Boys & Girls Club
- 10 Magnus Theatre
- 11 Land For Social Housing



3

Conclusions

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Without exception we can conclude that the Neighbourhood Improvement Program in the seven municipalities had an overwhelmingly positive community impact. In each instance the Program met defined neighbourhood needs before the neighbourhoods had deteriorated to a point beyond repair.

In no case did we observe substantial negative community impacts, such as a loss of jobs with the removal of industry, increased traffic problems elsewhere in the community or major residential displacement.

Generally the NIP projects met the six program objectives we identified in the first chapter. Certain specific problems did appear and these indicate areas where changes and improvements might be necessary in future programs of this type. These and our conclusions will be set out below by subject area.

Each municipality is, of course, unique and the individual neighbourhood programs were often quite different in content, as well as in scale. We cannot make sweeping generalizations about the entire program from our case studies. However, for the guidance of future programs, we will discuss significant common threads that ran through several communities and indicate possible improvements and new directions.

Our recommendations for future action follow in the next chapter.

3.1 HARD SERVICES

Hard service improvements, such as storm sewer installation, road re-surfacing, and sidewalk construction, were definitely required in each of the neighbourhood improvement areas examined. Improvements of this type eliminated existing environmental and potential health problems, including flooding in Grimsby and Prescott, and traffic circulation and volume control in Ottawa.

These hard service works also often enhanced the neighbourhoods visually when streets were resurfaced, and curbs and gutters constructed.

In most cases, though, NIP did not pay for all the hard service improvements. Additional funds were received from other government programs (including

Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Transportation and Communications) and/or the municipality contributed the necessary dollars. In Cochrane's case, for example, funds for sanitary sewer installation were received from Environment, while in Thunder Bay the required sewer works were paid for out of the capital works budget.

Consequently NIP assisted in the physical renewal of needy neighbourhoods in two ways:

- functioning as a catalyst to stimulate municipal and private investment in an older deteriorated neighbourhood;
- speeding up municipal works that might have taken the municipality a long time to do. It is important to note that the financial health and size of the community also contributes to its ability to finance complementary works. Cochrane (4974 pop.) for example, had to borrow \$40,000 to fund its portion of NIP; additional dollars were not available in its capital works budget to undertake the costly installation of sanitary sewers. In contrast Thunder Bay was able to spend \$2 million dollars in complementary capital improvements in Ogden-East End during the NIP period.

Our perception at the outset of our review was that communities might be tempted to use NIP as a substitute for a capital works program. The actual expenditure of money in the case study communities does not bear this out; at least equal and sometimes more funds were spent on soft service improvements.

3.2 SOFT SERVICES

The financial incentive for soft service improvements appears to work well. Although some municipalities would have been less eager to carry out such works if financially it had not been in their interests to do so.

As a result of the program emphasis in this direction some unique and imaginative projects were developed, such as the creation of the Forwarders' Museum in Prescott, the purchase of the Magnus Theatre in Thunder Bay, and the development of a large adventure playground in Cochrane. These helped create an all-round better living environment for the entire community and added interest for visitors.

Especially in the case of smaller municipalities, the new or improved facilities often serve the entire community, not just the neighbourhood. In smaller towns the entire community, not just the improvement area, should probably have a say in the type of soft service improvements to be done. Alternatively, it might be appropriate to designate some entire small communities as improvement areas. Under the NIP guidelines, of course, neighbourhood eligibility criteria were strictly defined and it was not possible to include an entire municipality.

Soft service eligibility criteria was an area of concern that we identified. There was difficulty at times in determining whether a particular item was a hard or soft service, for example, streetscaping in Ottawa, or whether an item was eligible for NIP funding at all, e.g. the landscaping improvements to King Street in Prescott. Often these deliberations resulted in a considerable loss of time in implementation. A solution to this problem is nevertheless quite difficult to find, since a flexible definition of soft/hard services enables a municipality to develop a program tailored to its exact needs.

3.3 LAND ACQUISITION

The purchase of a few scattered properties in Ogden-East End (Thunder Bay) appeared to work better, cost less and engender less controversy than the wholesale acquisition of industrial land in Laburnham (Etobicoke). The resulting Etobicoke parkland will have cost approximately \$600,000 per acre. There was also no community consensus on how to use the industrial lands; this contributed to the problems encountered in Laburnham.

It is interesting to note that the Laburnham project resembled in this respect the earlier approach under the former urban renewal programs.

The relocation of households for land purchase did not appear to be an issue in any of the case studies.

3.4 PROPERTY STANDARDS

To be eligible for NIP, the municipalities were required to pass a property standards by-law. The purpose was to ensure that public funds were protected, by preventing deterioration of properties. This also provided a link to RRAP and OHRP.

In all the case studies, the municipalities did not take the initiative in enforcing the by-law. They reacted to complaints for the most part. And in the smaller municipalities there was a strong reluctance to formally enforce the by-law except in the case of an abandoned or derelict property. Often social pressure was used instead and achieved similar results.

Nevertheless, this Program requirement forced municipalities to think in this direction and to follow through with a property standards by-law, if one was not in place already.

3.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public participation dimension of the Program seemed to lose its momentum toward the latter stages of the Program. Larger municipalities appeared to be more committed and inventive in their approaches to this process than smaller centres.

In all a wide variety of approaches was used to involve residents in NIP: from a few public meetings to decision-making working committees of council.

The involvement of residents in the process did work most often to create better links between the municipality and residents.

Where extensive participation occurred it did lengthen the process, particularly in the selection of improvements. In some instances there was also protracted disagreement between residents and the municipality. This may discourage extensive public involvement in the future in this particular municipality.

3.6 ADMINISTRATION

The methods used by each of the municipalities to carry out NIP differed and were related to the size of the municipality, the municipal organization and the size of the NIP budget to be administered.

NIP had the greatest financial impact on the smallest municipalities. In Prescott, for example, the municipal portion made up 100 percent of the Town's capital works budget over the life of the project. In comparison, the municipal contribution to the Centretown 4 NIP area comprised less than 1 percent of the City's capital works budget.

For the most part the municipalities met or were under budget. Ottawa and Grimsby spent less than they anticipated. The known financial limits appear to have been a positive feature of the Program.

On the other hand, five of the seven municipalities did not complete their projects on time. A number of factors contributed to this problem:

- delay in approvals by senior levels of government;
- delays resulting from the public participation process;
- difficulties constructing during the winter season.

Organizationally there did not seem to be any major problems with the administration of NIP at the local level. The main responsibility for NIP often differed, though, ranging from the clerk, to a single NIP coordinator, to an independent department, to an existing department.

3.7 REHABILITATION

NIP worked extremely well as a neighbourhood rehabilitation program, particularly in combination with RRAP. Further deterioration of these older residential areas was halted and these programs together provided a vehicle and the incentive for residents to help themselves.

Although the value of properties increased (in some case study communities, the increase was quite high) the neighbourhoods have all still retained their supply of low and moderate income housing stock. The upgrading of public facilities and services has not stimulated an influx of whitepainters, for instance. And in certain communities a larger number of landlords took advantage of RRAP improvement loans to improve rental accommodation. We could not determine why this occurred in some areas and not others, although in some there appeared to be a bigger supply of rental housing.

This rejuvenation of the neighbourhoods also resulted in spin-off development. In every case except Ottawa, (where there was no vacant land) new housing was constructed in the NIP area.

There was evidence, however, that a more comprehensive program for community renewal would be supported at the local level. Commercial properties bordering or in the improvement areas (in the case of smaller towns, this would be "Main Street") could also have made use of rehabilitation funding.

3.8 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There were three areas where concerns were expressed over eligibility criteria:

- the eligibility of items funded by NIP: whether or not they were considered a hard or soft service.
- the drawing of neighbourhood boundaries: sometimes quite artificial neighbourhoods are created by this process, especially in smaller towns where the whole community might legitimately be considered a neighbourhood. Another instance of where gerrymandering might occur is if there was not an adequate percentage of residential land use.
- the selection of communities eligible for NIP funding: one municipal official described the process as "Russian Roulette". It appeared from our discussions with local people that they did not clearly understand how the selection process worked and why one "eligible" municipality received funds and another one did not.

3.9 THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND PLANNING

In some of the municipalities a plan, showing the needed improvements, had already been prepared under the earlier Urban Renewal Program. With a few changes this plan then became the Redevelopment Plan under NIP.

In the case of Etobicoke for example this created difficulties, because residents on the NIP working committee did not agree with the previously adopted social housing goals.

On the whole the selection, planning and implementation stages of the NIP process were carried out separately from the local municipal planning process. The Redevelopment Plan was viewed as a completely separate

document from the Official Plan, which usually contained only a very general statement on rehabilitation. Rehabilitation was viewed as a program-related not a planning related activity.

The City of Ottawa was the only place where the Redevelopment Plan and NIP contributed directly to the planning process. The Centretown Secondary Plan had been under preparation prior to NIP and the Redevelopment Plan reiterated the objectives and actions proposed in the Secondary Plan. Thus the monies available under NIP enabled the City to implement this Secondary Plan.

Future community improvement programs should probably contain criteria or provisions to ensure that improvement area (or project) planning is part of the larger and more comprehensive municipal planning process. It is important that the "project plan" be a part of the overall plan for the community.



4

Recommendations

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Neighbourhood Improvement Program has proved a substantial success in the municipalities we examined and there appears to be an on-going need for senior government assistance in this area. From the Ministry of Housing's viewpoint, with its expressed interest in community renewal, funding for the development and/or improvement of hard and soft municipal services should be continued. There are, however, four major changes we think should be considered.

First of all, the Program should not necessarily be limited to residential neighbourhoods. It could be expanded to take on a more comprehensive function in terms of community renewal. This is particularly the case with smaller municipalities where there are no separate neighbourhoods as such and where the downtown and surrounding residential districts impact very strongly on one another. Prescott is an example where an expanded approach to NIP was taken and where all of the older parts of the Town were rejuvenated. In larger communities as well, neighbourhood commercial and even industrial uses should benefit from such a rehabilitation program. Consequently, the neighbourhood eligibility criteria could be redefined to allow scope for this broader approach if the municipality wished to do so.

The second recommendation is closely linked to the first. There appears to be significant differences between larger and smaller municipalities in types of problems, financing and municipal organization. It makes sense to develop a two-level program which would be sensitive to the needs of each. This would also allow a more comprehensive application of Provincial programs and would enable communities to plan for and implement substantial renewal plans. For example, Main Street, OHRP, ONIP and any future funding initiatives could be combined or developed into a community improvements package. Such an approach would be more conducive to a truly community-wide renewal process, particularly in smaller urban areas. In larger municipalities this would allow the inclusion of commercial strips within NIP areas.

The third recommendation concerns financing. A number of case study municipalities supplemented their share of NIP's cost with other Provincial government funding sources. None of the municipalities we talked to had

encountered any financial hardship although two, and possibly a third, had to raise debentures. There was nevertheless the perception of NIP as a free or almost free "hand out". For maximum utility of scarce funds as well as to engender more municipal interest and commitment, the possibility of cost-sharing on a 50-50 basis is highly adviseable. Municipalities might also be encouraged to raise more private funds from organizations or individuals as did Prescott and Cochrane.

The fourth recommendation has been alluded to throughout our report. That is that future funding for community improvement and renewal purposes should be tied to a requirement for related comprehensive community planning. The community renewal process should relate directly to current community planning actions in the municipality. And community renewal should be seen as part of that planning process, not simply a program-related activity.

Conversely, any approach to community renewal should include an assessment of the following, as integral steps in its planning process:

- . what is really needed;
- . the unique character of the community (physically, socially and economically);
- . the best location for the new facility or improvement;
- . a ranking in terms of priority of the activities or projects to be undertaken;
- . identification of the means of implementation.



Appendices

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Town of Cochrane

Mr. L.J. Adshead - Clerk/Treasurer
Mr. Bertrand - C.M.H.C., Timmins
Mr. Blackwell - M.T.C., Cochrane
Mr. Coady - Building Inspector
Mr. J. Kerr - Road Superintendent
Mr. C.J. Kretch - Vice President, Knox, Martin, Kretch
Ltd.
Mr. Leo Kytola - resident, Hillcrest Neighbourhood
Town Councillors

Borough of Etobicoke

Mrs. Gladys Cruickshank - resident, Laburnham Neigh-
bourhood
Mr. Jack Ewing - Clerks Department
Mrs. Ruth Grier - Alderman
Mr. Hempel - Property Standards Officer
Mr. Al Higgs - Parks Superintendent
Mr. Pat Keaveney - Alderman
Ms. Connie Nichols - Director of Policy and Research
Division
Mrs. Lily Owen - resident, Laburnham Neighbourhood
Mr. Glen Thompson - Industrial Commissioner

Town of Goderich

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation - Kitchener

Mr. Roman Dzus - Planner, Huron County Planning
Department

Mr. Jon Ginn - Resident, East Side Neighbourhood

Mr. Ken Hunter - Public Works Commissioner

Mr. Larry McCabe - Clerk/Treasurer, NIP co-ordinator

Mr. Burns Ross - Consulting Engineer

Mr. Dave Schram - Planner, Proctor and Redfern,
St. Catharines

Mr. Don Scott - resident, East Side Neighbourhood

Mr. Paul Zurbrigg - Local Real Estate Appraiser

Town of Grimsby

Mr. Brian Bing - Acting Planning Administrator

Mr. Mel Brown - Building Inspector

Mrs. L. Coutts - Grimsby Historical Society

Mr. David Jarvis - Realtor, A.E. LePage Limited

Mr. & Mrs. Percy Mason - residents, Grimsby Beach

City of Ottawa

Mrs. I. Birch - Loan Administrator

Mr. J.G. Cloutier - Head/Neighbourhood Rehabilitation
Program - Community Development Department

Mr. P. Grandmaitre - - Division Head, Community
Development Department

Mr. P. Lebrun - Senior Planner, Area Studies Division

Mr. J.O. Moorman - Manager, Property Standards Officer

Mr. K. Pritchard - Property Standards Officer

Mr. Neville Trevor - Chairman, NIP Committee,
Centretown 4

Mr. Bill Quann - Realtor

Town of Prescott

Mr. K.O. Boal - Clerk
Mr. A. Hoogenboom - NIP Co-ordinator
Mr. J. Johnson - resident, Area 1
Mrs. S. Lawn - Mayor
Mrs. B. Marriner - Realtor
Mr. J. Morris - resident, Area 1
Mr. Solomon - Town Engineer

City of Thunder Bay

Mr. Doug Anderson - Property Standards Officer
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation - Thunder Bay
Ms. Margaret Frenette - Co-ordinator, Community
Revitalization
Mr. Wilf Hankkio - Engineering Designer
Mr. Paul Harper - Director of Planning
Mr. J.G. Kirkwood - Inspection Services Coordinator
Mr. Max Landiak - resident, Ogden-East End
Ms. Mary Lucas - Community Development Officer
Ms. Sally McMahon - resident, Ogden-East End
Ms. Diane Sutherland - resident, Ogden East End
Mr. Guido Tocheri - realtor, Midwest Realty
Mr. R.H. Wright - City Engineer

Community Renewal Branch - Ministry of Housing

Mr. Jack Brown, Director and all his staff.

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